

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 6483

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, EAID, PEPR, CG
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE ON REFORMS: BRITISH AND BELGIAN MEET WITH MOBUTU

REF: A) KINSHASA 6429; B) KINSHASA 6393; C) KINSHASA 6370

1. SUMMARY: FOUR OF PARIS FIVE CHIEFS OF MISSION HAVE MADE DEMARCHES ON REFORMS TO MOBUTU AS OF EVENING JUNE 20. GERMAN CHARGE HAS REQUESTED AUDIENCE AND IS AWAITING APPOINTMENT. BRITISH AND BELGIAN, WHO SAW MOBUTU FOLLOWING MY DEMARCHE, FOUND HIM CALM NOT UNRECEPTIVE, BUT OBVIOUSLY FEELING UNDER PRESSURE. ALTHOUGH BOTH AMBASSADORS REPORTEDLY RAISED SOME TOUGH AND SENSITIVE ISSUES, I HAVE DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT OTHER THREE AMBASSADORS HAVE BEEN RELATIVELY GENTLE WITH MOBUTU AND HAVE LET US CARRY MAIN BURDEN OF DELIVERING HARDER LINE. MOBUTU REPEATED TO BRITISH AND BELGIAN HIS ASSURANCES MADE TO ME THAT NEXT THREE MONTHS WILL BRING MANY OF IMPROVEMENTS WHICH OUR DEMARCHES SOUGHT. END SUMMARY.

2. PARIS FIVE REPS MET AFTERNOON NUNE 20 TO DISCUSS MEETINGS WHICH FRENCH, US, BRITISH, AND BELGIAN AMBASSADORS (IN THAT
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ORDER) HAD HELD WITH MOBUTU TO DELIVER DEMARCHE ON REFORMS. GERMAN CHARGE HAD REQUESTED APPOINTMENT WITH PRESIDENT BUT WAS STILL WAITING WORD ON WHEN MOBUTU WOULD RECEIVE HIM. BRITISH AND BELGIAN AGREED WITH MY JUDGMENT (REF A) THAT MOBUTU WAS NOT AS UNRECEPTIVE TO OUR DEMARCHES AS WE MIGHT HAVE ANTICIPATED. THEY AGREED THAT PRESIDENT SEEMED UNDER SOME STRAIN AND APPARENTLY FELT BELEAGUED. MOBUTU RE-

PORTEDLY ASSURED BOTH AMBASSADORS THAT, GIVEN THREE MONTHS TO WORK ON ZAIRE'S MANY SERIOUS PROBLEMS, HE WILL DEMONSTRATE REAL PROGRESS ON REFORMS.

3. BRITISH AMBASSADOR SAID HE COMPLIMENTED MOBUTU ON HIS OVERTURES TO KAUNDA AND EXPRESSED HOPE FOR CONTINUED RECONCILIATION OF ZAIRE WITH ZAMBIA. HE ALSO EMPHASIZED NEED FOR IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ZAIRE AND ANGOLA. AMBASSADOR SAID HE TOLD PRESIDENT THAT HIS WORDS ON REFORMS HAD BEEN WELCOMED BY ZAIRE'S FRIENDS; HOWEVER THE WORDS HAD NOT BEEN MATCHED BY DEEDS. MOBUTU EMPHASIZED THE NUMBER AND SERIOUSNESS OF THE PROBLEMS HE FACES AND ASKED THAT HE BE GIVEN THREE MONTHS TO PROVE THAT HE CAN HANDLE THEM. BRITISH AMBASSADOR PROPOSED THAT MOBUTU DELEGATE MORE POWER TO MINISTRIES. HE REMINDED PRESIDENT THAT ALTHOUGH UK HAD OFFERED TO BUILD BRIDGES IN ZAIRE, IMPLEMENTATION OF PROPOSED ASSISTANCE WAS STALLED BY INACTION AT GOZ LECTURED ACTING FON MINISTER ABOUT ALLEGED DELAY.) BRITISH AMBASSADOR SAID MOBUTU WAS IN GOOD HUMOR THROUGHOUT MEETING.

4. BELGIAN AMBASSADOR REPORTEDLY DELIVERED LETTER FROM KING BAUDOUIN WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS UNRELATED TO DEMARCHE AND DEALT AT LEAST IN PART WITH QUESTION OF ZAIRIAN OPPOSITION ELEMENTS IN BELGIUM. BELGIAN AMBASSADOR UNDERSCORED GOB'S OFFER TO PROVIDE URGENT ASSISTANCE OVER THE NEXT THREE MONTHS, BUT HE REMINDED MOBUTU THAT CONTROLS WOULD BE MAINTAINED OVER EMERGENCY SUPPLIES ALL THE WAY THROUGH DISTRIBUTION TO CONSUMERS. HE
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ALSO EMPHASIZED NEED FOR RESTRAINT OVER FAZ TO PREVENT ITS VICTIMIZING POPULATION. MOBUTU SAID EVERHTING COULD NOT BE CHANGED OVERNIGHT BUT THAT HE INTENDED IN THIS CONNECTION TO ABOLISH THE GENDARMERIE. WHEN BELGIAN ASKED MOBUTU ABOUT LOGISTICAL SUPPORT FOR AFRICAN PEACE-KEEPING FORCES, MOBUTU SAID HE WAS STUDYING THE QUESTION AND HOPED HE COULD "COUNT ON THE AMERICANS" FOR SOME HELP. WHEN BELGIAN URGED MOBUTU TO PRESS FORWARD ON NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND TO PUT HIS MINISTERS TO WORK, MOBUTU REACTED POSITIVELY. BELGIAN SAID HE TOLD MOBUTU THAT AT BRUSSELS ZAIRE'S FRIENDS HAD GIVEN GOZ THREE MONTHS' TIME IN WHICH TO MAKE NECESSARY CHANGES. MOBUTU PROMISED THAT THOSE WHO HAD SHOWN SUCH CONFIDENCE IN ZAIRE WOULD NOT BE DISAPPMNTED.

5. COMMENT: IT IS APPARENT THAT THE US DEMARCHE, TOGETHER WITH PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER, CONSTITUTED THE TOUGHEST OF THE PITCHES MADE TO MOBUTU. ALTHOUGH BRITISH ASSURED THE OTHER FOUR THAT HE SPOKE FIRMLY TO PRESIDENT ON NEED FOR CHANGES, I HAVE DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT HE WAS SOMEWHAT DISARMED BY MOBUTU'S APPARENT REASONABLENESS AND CONSEQUENTLY WAS COMPARATIVELY GENTLE IN HIS PRESENTATION. THIS MIGHT HELP TO EXPLAIN WHAT BRITISH TERMED "A SURPRISINGLY EASY PASSAGE". BELGIAN APPARENTLY WAS ABLE TO MAKE SOME OF THE DIFFICULT POINTS. HOWEVER, IT IS

CLEAR THAT GOB CONTINUES TO FEEL ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE AND HAS GONE TO GREAT LENGTHS TO AVOID PROVOKING MOBUTU ANY MORE THAN NECESSARY. VERY MUCH PREOCCUPIED BY THE WELFARE AND STATE OF MIND OF THE LARGE BELGIAN POPULATION HERE, THE GOB HAS ALREADY TURNED ITS ATTENTION TO PUTTING IN PLACE AN EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO PREVENT ANY FURTHER SLIDE TOWARD A SITUATION WHERE THERE MIGHT BE FOOD RIOTS OR OTHER BREAKDOWN OF CIVIL ORDER. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHY THE GERMAN CHARGE HAS FAILED SO FAR TO GAIN AN AUDIENCE. IT COULD BE SIMPLY A MATTER OF SCHEDULING AND HIS CHARGE STATUS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE DELAY COULD BE RELATED TO MOBUTU'S IRRITATION WITH THE VOICE OF GERMANY'S DETAILED REPORT OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THE DEMARCHES BEFORE THEY WERE MADE.

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